Amendment in Atomic Energy Act, 1962

760. SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government proposed to bring amendment in the Atomic Energy Act 1962 to provide private participation in Country's nuclear power programme;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any expert committee has been set up by the Government to examine ''Ticklish'' issues involved in the matter;

(d) if so, the details thereof, alongwith the recommendations of the Committee; and

(e) Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The process of reviewing the Atomic Energy Act, 1962 and suggesting amendments is currently underway.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) Do not arise

'No Fly Zones' over the nuclear installation locations

761. SHRI K.C. KONDAIAH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to declare no fly zones over the nuclear installation locations;

(b) if so, whether Government are considering to take action in complete coordination with the Ministry of Civil Aviation; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Yes, Sir. The Department of Atomic Energy have already approached the Ministry of Civil Aviation to consider the air space above the vital Atomic Energy Establishments declared as 'No Fly Zones' to restrict/prohibit flying of aircrafts over/close to the installations.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Response of the Ministry of Civil Aviation is awaited.

Radiation Facility for Foodstuff

762. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of food grains and other food commodities subject to radiation in the country;

(b) how much food stuffs are saved annually by radiation technology indicating the figures for vegetables, fruits, fish and other grains; and

(c) the value of such food commodities saved by way of radiation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) About one thousand (1000) tonnes of spices have been processed till date in the only Technology Demonstration Plant set up by the Department of Atomic Energy in January 2000 with a capacity to process thirty (30) tonnes spices per day.

(b) Nil, in view of what is stated above.

(c) As only spices are being irradiated so far and these are consumed in the domestic market and also exported, it is difficult to quantify exact savings. However, it may be said that the 15%-20% of spices that were being lost due to spoilage are now being saved.

Closure of Tarapur Atomic Centre

763. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the news report which appeared in vernacular daily "Loksatta" dated the 21st January 2002 regarding closing of Tarapur Atomic Centre by May 2002;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Lok Satta (Mumbai edition) on 21.01.2002 carried a news item regarding Tarapur Atomic Power Station (TAPS), issued by Press Trust of India, Hyderabad. According to this news item, Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) has permitted operation of TAPS up to 31.05.2002, as an interim measure to allow time for comprehensive assessment and review of safety related issues for long term continued operation of the plant. In India, Nuclear Power Plants are given licence for operation for a specified period of time, presently three years at a stretch. The present licence in respect of TAPS is for operations up to 31.05.2002. The safety assessment of the plant for long term continued operation is expected to be completed shortly for review by AERB. This is part of the re-licensing